

## **SPEECH OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR DR. K.K. PAUL ON THE OCCASION OF SEMINAR ON "THE DEVELOPMENT PATH FOR UTTARAKHAND- VISION 2020 – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES", SCHEDULED ON 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2015 AT WADIA INSTITUTE OF HIMALAYAN GEOLOGY, DEHRADUN**

At the outset, I would like to thank the organisers and Shri Tarun Vijay, in particular, for extending me this invitation to this afternoon's Seminar, on the development of Uttarakhand.

2. Movements at the political level had been continuing in this part of U.P., in Jharkhand area of Bihar, and Chhattisgarh area of M.P. for a long time. The process got accelerated towards the nineties, and the sacrifices made by Uttarakhand Shaheeds fructified, and finally the smaller states were carved out of the three largest States of the country. In economic terms, the plight of the three large states came into a sharper focus with the coinage of the term BIMARU. Perhaps no other acronym, which is attributed to Ashis Bose, has had such a major psychological impact on economic thinking at the conceptual and planning levels for the constituent states.

3. The new States, all the three of them, outperformed their parent Bimaru states, by a huge margin and emerged as dynamic models. Today, Uttarakhand is even outperforming a number of advanced States in the country. Its average GDP growth is one of the highest in the country. During the 10<sup>th</sup> plan period, Uttarakhand grew at an average of 8.8% annually as against only 4.6% of U.P., Jharkhand at 11.1% as against 4.7% of Bihar and Chhattisgarh at 9.2% as against 4.3% of M.P. maintained the trend of the success stories. According to the Quick survey estimates published by the Department of Statistics, Govt. of Uttarakhand, per capita income of Uttarakhand can grow up to more than Rs. 90,000/- in 2012-13, which is again way above the national level and even exceeds, the estimates of the States like, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, U.P. and West Bengal (figures taken from Statistical Hand Book).

4. These factors have, in Uttarakhand, successfully brought down the percentage of people living below the poverty line from 32.7% in 2004-05 to 11.3% in 2012. Today, 99% of the villages in the state have been electrified. These are significant achievements for our State which is still in its nascent stage of development.

5. Nevertheless, all these indicators are a good enough platform for the state. And today, we can safely say that we have reached the take off stage. But there are challenges.

## CHALLENGES

6. In the year 2000-2001, U.N. had assigned targets in the social sector for the year 2015, and these were known as Millennium Goals. We are all aware of the prevailing situation in some of the countries in our neighbourhood, in the nineties, with special reference to the social and health sector.

It is, however, a matter of surprise that performance of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh has been far ahead of our own country in some of these areas. The statistics were checked and found to be correct, and then it was found out as to how the transformation had taken place. Bangladesh in particular had focussed on education for women. It was their experience, that once the women were educated, they took care of all the other issues, much better than any one else. In Uttarakhand, the proportion of female literacy is very high, about 75% but there are several health related issues particularly, anaemia and malnutrition & protein deficiency in women and children, which has been hampering their growth and personality.

7. It has amply been acknowledged that good health promotes economic growth and social stability, while at the same time reducing poverty and income inequality. Rightly so, in this context, the Indian Constitution has guaranteed the 'right to life' as a basic human right to every citizen of India under Article 21. In Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, the government's responsibility concerning public health has also been laid down.

8. Education and health are both end goals as well as means to achieve other goals. The countries which have achieved higher growth rates of per capita income during the last few decades – South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and more recently China – also had promoted higher education and health levels, before embarking on their growth path, indicating the instrumental role of education and health.

Health and Education are more important of the challenges as once we have them, then people are physically, mentally and intellectually ready to take on other challenges.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that we should renew our focus on health and education sectors.

9. Infrastructure Development is one of the basic platforms on which the entire progress of the state rests. Instead of covering various modes of infrastructure, it is felt that in a state like Uttarakhand, the basic road connectivity, power and communication are of utmost importance. Even if new roads are taking time to be constructed, we have to ensure maintenance of old roads. Several negative factors, now being attributed, will just vanish, if we ensure proper roads. People in the interior, even if they are enterprising have no access to markets trade or production oriented works on account of lack of

accessibility leading to unemployment and migration. If travel time is reduced and road networks made more hospitable, besides improving economy they will directly impact in a positive manner on the tourist traffic. There is no dearth of scenic beauty here, but people go elsewhere, due to driving conditions being better, and places of stay being more hygienic; so if we have these, there will be enough of tourist traffic. Concept of Highway tourism can also be promoted.

10. SWAN (State Wide Area Network) has already established net connectivity between the State Headquarters, District Headquarters and up to Tehsil level. 663 spots in the State already have horizontal connectivity. Besides the routine government work, Samanya Sewa Centres networks could be made use of by Health Department for tele-medicine, agriculture and horticulture department can use it for extension work and other advice on the pattern of Kisan Sewa Kendra on cell phones.

10. There is another serious problem of migration from the far flung mountaineous areas to the plains, which is a cause of major concern. This is a manifestation of lopsided growth or the imbalances in our economic development. Earlier, perhaps, people in those areas did not have a choice, but now with extremely rapid development in the plain districts of the state, people feel emboldened to move to such areas. **Challenge is to have job creation in higher and remote areas.** If this is to be ensured than we have to lay greater emphasis on much better road connectivity, skill development in schools, development of the handloom and handicraft sector through use of power looms, enhanced usage of land for cash crops like aromatics and herbs, food processing, encouraging tea cultivation, apple, walnut and also silk production. Almost all of them are non-polluting which would be an added advantage.

11. Uttarakhand can benefit greatly by focusing on organic and herbal farming, which is a high-returns area. Adoption of organic farming in the state will bring more returns, generate jobs in the areas of on-farm storing, processing, value addition, packaging and marketing, considering that organic farms provide over 30 per cent more jobs per hectare as against non-organic farms. Organic products of the state like apples and apricots of Uttarkashi, almonds from Purola, sparkling red juice of Buransh (Rhododendron) and fresh honey have already found many markets both within the state and outside., Fragrant green organic mint (Pudina) and Chakrata's deep red "Rajmah" are two other products that are very popular.

Uttarakhand, specially Dehradun, should place itself firmly on the path of developing floriculture. The farming of exotic flowers should be encouraged in Uttarakhand with facilities like refrigerated vehicles to carry flowers to the airport, in order to reach them to large markets, both domestic and foreign.

12. Uttarakhand can also be an ideal destination for setting up of Herbal Export Zones (HEZs) and Herbal Farm Clusters . These export zones and farm clusters of the `Devbhoomi` would also create employment opportunities. Like the Herbal Research and Development Institute, Gopeshwar (Uttarakhand), some more Herbal R&D Institutes can be set up in the State, for the optimal use of medical and herbal plants. By setting up of these institutes, not only will the farmers be benefited in terms of employment in the herbal industry, but students will also get an opportunity to study this field. Uttarakhand has more than 170 medicinal and aromatic plant species in its foothills. In addition, fruit like apples, oranges, pear, grapes peach, plum apricot, litchi, mangoes and guava are widely grown in the state. There is immense potential for development of horticultural crops.

In the end One would ask about source and supply of power. Without going into the debate for big or small – let me state that besides the stand alone solar systems, in remote areas of the State, mini and micro hydel projects would be far more useful on the basis of decentralised distribution and generation, and this will be cost effective as taking the transmission lines to far flung areas is very expensive and restoring them after the hits of inclement weather, can be equally bothersome and expensive.

Lastly, I would say that God has given us his bounties in a wholesome manner, and now it is entirely upon us, to make use of these and make Dev Bhoomi into our Karm Bhoomi and into a Bhoomi of peace and prosperity and flowing with milk & honey.

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